

# Identifying Characteristics and Background Information

## *Description*

Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) and bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) are medium-sized wild cats. Adult males are usually larger than females in both species. Lynx weights average 24 pounds for males and 20 pounds for females. Bobcat weights average 26 pounds for males and 15 pounds for females. Average lengths (from nose to tip of tail) are very similar for lynx and bobcats: 34 inches for males of both species, 32 inches for female lynx, and 31 inches for female bobcats.

Bobcat pelts may be light gray, yellowish brown, buff, brown, or reddish brown and streaked or spotted with black or dark brown. Under portions of the body are white with black spots and with black bars on the fore legs. Lynx generally have more gray and less red in their pelts than bobcats and the belly fur is grayish-white or buff-white with mottled, indistinct black spots.

Lynx have ear tufts and facial ruffs on their cheeks that are larger and more conspicuous than those on bobcats. Ear tufts are usually longer than 1 inch on lynx but shorter than 1 inch on bobcats. Bobcat and lynx tails are approximately 4–6 inches long and match their pelt color except for the tip (about the last inch). The tip of the tail on bobcats is usually black only on the upper side whereas on lynx the entire tip is black.



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**Belly Markings**  
**Lynx (left),**  
**Bobcat (right)**

*Lynx spots are mottled. Bobcats have more distinct spots contrasted with whiter fur.*



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*Lynx tails appear much the same viewed top (top left) or bottom (bottom left). The lynx tail tip is completely black all around, while bobcat tails show black bars with a white tip when viewed from above (top right) and show a lot of white underneath (bottom right).*



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The hind legs of both bobcats and lynx are longer than their fore legs, which help them in springing to catch prey. However, the hind legs are even more disproportionately large on lynx, causing them to have a “stooped” appearance. Lynx also have much larger feet than bobcats. This gives them a “snow-shoe-like” advantage chasing prey in deep snow.



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**Top Left:**

*Bobcats usually have ear tufts shorter than 1 inch.*

**Top Right:**

*Heavily furred bobcats might appear lynx-like, with significant ear tufts and cheek ruffs.*



**Left:**

*Lynx usually have ear tufts longer than 1 inch.*